

(K) of subsection (b)(1) shall be appointed for a term of 2 years.

(2) VACANCIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A vacancy on the Council—

(i) shall not affect the powers of the Council; and

(ii) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(B) DURATION OF APPOINTMENT.—A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term for which the predecessor was appointed shall be appointed only for the remainder of the term.

(d) MEETINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall meet at the call of the co-chairs.

(2) FREQUENCY.—The Council shall meet at least semiannually.

(e) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Council, including a designee of a member, shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may hold hearings or conduct other business.

(f) CO-CHAIRS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There shall be a Federal co-chair and non-Federal co-chair of the Council.

(2) APPOINTMENT.—

(A) FEDERAL CO-CHAIR.—The Secretary shall be Federal co-chair.

(B) NON-FEDERAL CO-CHAIR.—Every 2 years, the Council members appointed under subparagraphs (G) through (K) of subsection (b)(1) shall select a non-Federal co-chair from among the members appointed under those subparagraphs.

(g) DIRECTOR.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall serve as Director of the Council.

(2) DUTIES.—The Director shall serve the interests of all members of the Council.

SEC. 102. DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall—

(1) not later than 1 year after the date of the first meeting of the Council, develop a comprehensive National Drought Policy Action Plan that—

(A)(i) delineates and integrates responsibilities for activities relating to drought (including drought preparedness, mitigation, research, risk management, training, and emergency relief) among Federal agencies; and

(ii) ensures that those activities are coordinated with the activities of the States, local governments, Indian tribes, and neighboring countries;

(B) is consistent with—

(i) this Act and other applicable Federal laws; and

(ii) the laws and policies of the States for water management;

(C) is integrated with drought management programs of the States, Indian tribes, local governments, watershed groups, and private entities; and

(D) avoids duplicating Federal, State, tribal, local, watershed, and private drought preparedness and monitoring programs in existence on the date of enactment of this Act;

(2) evaluate Federal drought-related programs in existence on the date of enactment of this Act and make recommendations to Congress and the President on means of eliminating—

(A) discrepancies between the goals of the programs and actual service delivery;

(B) duplication among programs; and

(C) any other circumstances that interfere with the effective operation of the programs;

(3) make recommendations to the President, Congress, and appropriate Federal Agencies on—

(A) the establishment of common inter-agency triggers for authorizing Federal drought mitigation programs; and

(B) improving the consistency and fairness of assistance among Federal drought relief programs;

(4) in conjunction with the Secretary of Commerce, coordinate and prioritize specific activities to establish and improve the National Integrated Drought Information System by—

(A) taking into consideration the limited resources for—

(i) drought monitoring, prediction, and research activities; and

(ii) water supply forecasting; and

(B) providing for the development of an effective drought early warning system that—

(i) communicates drought conditions and impacts to—

(I) decisionmakers at the Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local levels of government;

(II) the private sector; and

(III) the public; and

(ii) includes near-real-time data, information, and products developed at the Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local levels of government that reflect regional and State differences in drought conditions;

(5) in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of the Interior—

(A) encourage and facilitate the development of drought preparedness plans under subtitle C, including establishing the guidelines under sections 121(c) and 122(a); and

(B) based on a review of drought preparedness plans, develop and make available to the public drought planning models to reduce water resource conflicts relating to water conservation and droughts;

(6) develop and coordinate public awareness activities to provide the public with access to understandable, and informative materials on drought, including—

(A) explanations of the causes of drought, the impacts of drought, and the damages from drought;

(B) descriptions of the value and benefits of land stewardship to reduce the impacts of drought and to protect the environment;

(C) clear instructions for appropriate responses to drought, including water conservation, water reuse, and detection and elimination of water leaks;

(D) information on State and local laws applicable to drought; and

(E) information on the assistance available to resource-dependent businesses and industries during a drought; and

(7) establish operating procedures for the Council.

(b) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this section, the Council shall consult with groups affected by drought emergencies, including groups that represent—

(1) agricultural production, wildlife, and fishery interests;

(2) forestry and fire management interests;

(3) the credit community;

(4) rural and urban water associations;

(5) environmental interests;

(6) engineering and construction interests;

(7) the portion of the science community that is concerned with drought and climatology;

(8) resource-dependent businesses and other private entities (including the recreation and tourism industries); and

(9) watershed groups.

(c) AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—

(1) DESIGNATION OF LEAD AGENCIES.—

(A) DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.—The Department of Commerce shall be the lead agency for purposes of implementing subsection (a)(4).

(B) DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND THE INTERIOR.—The Department of the Army and the Department of the Interior shall jointly be the lead agency for purposes of implementing—

(i) paragraphs (5) and (6) of section subsection (a); and

(ii) section 122.

(C) DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.—The Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the lead agencies designated under subparagraphs (A) and (B), shall be the lead agency for purposes of implementing section 121.

(2) COOPERATION FROM OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The head of each Federal agency shall cooperate as appropriate with the lead agencies in carrying out any duties under this Act.

(d) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the first meeting of the Council, and annually thereafter, the Council shall submit to Congress a report on the activities carried out under this title.

(B) INCLUSIONS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The annual report shall include a summary of drought preparedness plans completed under sections 123 through 125.

(ii) INITIAL REPORT.—The initial report submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include any recommendations of the Council under paragraph (2) or (3) of subsection (a).

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Council shall submit to Congress a report that recommends—

(A) amendments to this Act; and

(B) whether the Council should continue.

SEC. 103. POWERS OF THE COUNCIL.

(a) HEARINGS.—The Council may hold hearings, meet and act at any time and place, take any testimony and receive any evidence that the Council considers advisable to carry out this title.

(b) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Council may obtain directly from any Federal agency any information that the Council considers necessary to carry out this title.

(2) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), on request of the Secretary or the non-Federal co-chair, the head of a Federal agency may provide information to the Council.

(B) LIMITATION.—The head of a Federal agency shall not provide any information to the Council that the Federal agency head determines the disclosure of which may cause harm to national security interests.

(c) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Council may use the United States mail in the same manner and under the same conditions as other agencies of the Federal Government.

(d) GIFTS.—The Council may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

(e) FEDERAL FACILITIES.—If the Council proposes the use of a Federal facility for the purposes of carrying out this title, the Council shall solicit and consider the input of the Federal agency with jurisdiction over the facility.

SEC. 104. COUNCIL PERSONNEL MATTERS.

(a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—

(1) NON-FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—A member of the Council who is not an officer or employee of the Federal Government shall serve without compensation.

(2) FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—A member of the Council who is an officer or employee of the United States shall serve without compensation in addition to the compensation received for services of the member as an officer or employee of the Federal Government.

(b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Council shall be allowed travel expenses at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5,